

PI: Roy Baumeister

Project Title: Postdoctoral Fellowship

Postdoctoral Fellowship: For Dr. Cory Clark to work with Dr. Roy Baumeister for two years.

Title of Proposal: "Does inequality and a lack of perceived freedom and control explain the culture of victimhood?"

Amount: \$60,000.00

Payment Type: Fixed Price

Proposal: Attached to this email

This is the only Koch Foundation project we have had.

Best,

Robin Jackson

Grants Compliance Analyst

FSU Research Foundation, Inc.

2000 Levy Avenue

Building A., Suite 351

Tallahassee, FL 32310

Ph: (850) 644-2130

Fax: (850) 644-3658

The information transmitted is intended solely for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you

received this email in error, please contact the sender
and delete the material from your computer.

pdf

038428_Fi...1-2016.pdf

4.2 MB

From: Anne Rowe arowe@admin.fsu.edu
Subject: Fwd: RF02702 Baumeister/Charles Koch Foundation
Date: Nov 15, 2017 at 7:31:01 AM
To: Lamar Rowe hlarow@msn.com

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Heather Cave" <hcave@fsu.edu>
To: "Anne Rowe" <arowe@admin.fsu.edu>
Subject: FW: RF02702 Baumeister/Charles Koch Foundation

Anne, we only have one Koch funded project since 2014. An overview is provided below the proposal is attached so you can better understand the scope. Please let me know if I can provide anything else.

Heather Cave

FSU Research Foundation, Inc.
850.644.6222

From: Robin Jackson
Sent: Friday, November 03, 2017 9:54 AM
To: Heather Cave <hcave@fsu.edu>
Subject: RF02702 Baumeister/Charles Koch Foundation

Here you go!

Department: Psychology

Does inequality and a lack of perceived freedom and control explain the culture of victimhood?

Our proposal seeks a postdoctoral fellowship for Dr. Cory Clark to work with Prof. Roy Baumeister for two years. Thus far we have worked at separate institutions and have had only a couple opportunities for live interaction, but we have managed to collaborate on a couple publications that provide a background for the proposed work.

One idea of ours is to examine the role of beliefs about free will and freedom to control one's outcomes in relation to the culture of victimhood that currently is spreading in several segments of the US and more generally Western civilization. Several key analyses have suggested that the victimhood culture rests on a set of moral assertions. Beliefs about free will and freedom are often central to morality, and indeed our own work has found that perceived moral transgressions lead people to increase their belief in free will as a means of constructing blameworthy agents (Clark et al., 2014). Yet the victim role in some ways captures the antithesis of this, for the victim's role is not that of a free, responsible actor but as a passive and often helpless victim of external forces.

The proposed research aims to elucidate the motivational and situational factors associated with the so-called moral culture of victimhood. As some sociological analyses have proposed, the central thrust of victim culture is that people or groups compete for status as victims, and advance their case by increasing their sensitivity to offenses. In the last couple years, American university students have begun to agitate about "microaggressions," which often take the form of speech acts that are not intentionally offensive, but that make assumptions about normative behavior or draw potentially stereotypical attention to race, gender, or other categories in which victim status is available. For example, the question "Do you have a girlfriend?" might be considered offensive to a gay man, even though the comment was likely not meant to offend. At some universities, to say "The best qualified person should get the job" is considered an offensive microaggression, presumably because it could be interpreted as criticizing affirmative action policies that seek to advance members of victim groups. People then publicize microaggressions on social media, on www.microaggressions.com, and to other third parties, seeking to cultivate an image of victimhood, deserving of some sort of assistance. This creates a society of moral conflict. We are interested in understanding some of the underlying factors for this recent shift in our moral culture.

An irony of the culture of victimhood is that it flourishes in highly progressive and egalitarian settings, such as American universities. The moral culture of victimhood may do best in a progressive-liberal environment because it relies on appeals to powerful third parties (such as administration or government) to compensate and protect victims against the ostensible oppression. We propose that the moral culture of victimhood results from reduced perceptions of control and self-efficacy to overcome one's situation. In some of our own work, we found that students who took a university neuroscience course, in which they learned about the neural underpinnings of human behavior, came to believe less in free will (Shariff et al., 2015). Education related to the genetic and situational factors responsible for human behavior likely leads college students to believe less in personal responsibility in general, which means that the oppressed do not deserve any disadvantages they have relative to others. Therefore, all inequality seems unfair due to the understanding that nobody is really personally responsible for his or her current social rank, whether positive or negative. Hence the moral culture of victimhood supports anger at all inequality.

Some historians have concluded that the international Communist movement of the early 20th century fared much worse in America than in Europe because of the strong American belief in individual responsibility and self-reliance. Poor workers blamed themselves rather than the system for their low position in society. The moral culture of victimhood may be changing this, though (perhaps ironically) not through the working class and underclass but rather through privileged segments such as university students. Still, everyone has reason to think he or she could be better off, and embracing the victim role places responsibility elsewhere rather than on personal incompetency. We propose that inequality motivates people to blame others' prejudice and structural oppression to explain cases where historically underprivileged groups are not achieving equally.

We would like to conduct a series of studies seeking to determine whether reduced perceptions of control and self-efficacy combined with a threat of inequality or failure lead to higher perceptions of victimhood. We hope to look at the relationships between personality variables related to control (e.g., belief in free will, perceived self-efficacy, attitudes related to the Protestant work ethic) and victimhood. We also hope to conduct laboratory experiments in which we will manipulate perceived control (e.g., through education about neural bases of human behavior, or by priming uncontrollable factors such as race and sex versus more controllable factors such as hard work) and manipulating threat/perceived inequality (e.g., by having participants consider their own failures versus their achievements, or by having participants read about the gender wage gap) to determine their influences on perceived victimhood. To measure victimhood, participants will rate the offensiveness of various microaggressions, the extent to which various acts reflect prejudice, report their perceived structural oppression, and/or report their anger about inequality in general.

If our studies successfully demonstrate that reduced perceptions of control and self-efficacy combined with a threat of inequality or failure lead to higher perceptions of victimhood, we would like to extend this work to determine whether perceived victimhood influences actual work ethic and perseverance. For example, we are interested in testing whether increasing perceptions of victimhood leads people to give up more quickly on challenging tasks. This would suggest that the victimhood culture is a maladaptive self-fulfilling prophecy where perceiving the self as unable to achieve due to oppression reduces one's actual ability to achieve.

Overall, we hope this work will shed light on the emergence of this potentially damaging new culture where individuals publically present themselves as pitiable and weak.

Recently, we have seen an increase in claims that students are being oppressed by administrators, faculty, course material, fellow classmates, art installations, and other intellectual materials (e.g., books). The present research seeks to investigate two factors we believe are contributing to recent hypersensitivity on college campuses: a lack of perceived control and self-efficacy coupled with perceived inequality. We propose that perceived inequality poses a threat to traditionally oppressed groups, particularly in relatively egalitarian places such as university settings, as the relative privilege of individuals in such settings suggests major oppression is not to blame for any remaining inequality. Thus, such individuals have become hypersensitive to “microaggressions” as embracing the victim role places responsibility elsewhere rather than on personal incompetency. Furthermore, calls for administrative action to rectify such perceived inequality seems to reflect a powerlessness to overcome offense or resolve conflict oneself.

We would like to conduct a series of studies seeking to determine whether reduced perceptions of control and self-efficacy combined with a threat of inequality or personal failure lead to higher perceptions of victimhood. We have many ideas for how we might manipulate and measure these variables. For example, we will manipulate perceived control by educating participants about neural bases of human behavior, and manipulate perceived inequality by having participants read about the gender wage gap to determine their influences on perceived victimhood and/or hypersensitivity. We are interested in many measurements of victimhood and hypersensitivity, but some include perceived offensiveness of various microaggressions, perceived responsibility of authority figures to protect the emotional well-being of students, and desires to restrict free speech, particularly by groups perceived as possessing intolerant beliefs or attitudes.

Budget Estimate

We request funding for a postdoctoral researcher, Cory Clark, based on a monthly salary rate of \$4,000 for a total of \$48,000/year project salary + approximately \$20,000/year for health insurance/benefits + \$2000/year for conference travel. We also request \$3000/year for research expenses, such as subject payments and stimulus materials, for a total of \$73,000/year. We request funding for two years with an option for a third year if the project is going very well and would benefit from more time.

PI(s):
 UNIVERSITY:
 PROJECT DATES:
 GRANTOR:
 TITLE:
 NUMBER OF YEARS:

PI Name
 FSU
 Dates
 Funding Agency
 Project Title

*Only fill in colored cells

				Dates		TOTAL
Postdoctoral Associate	Effort Year	Rate(B/W)	Pay Periods	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	
Postdoc Name	100%	\$1,839	26 1	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$96,000
Fringe Rate (1.95%)		1.95%		\$936	\$936	\$1,872
Health Insurance (bi-weekly)		\$296	24 0	\$7,104	\$7,104	\$14,208
TOTAL POSTDOC SALARY:				\$56,040	\$56,040	\$112,080
TOTAL SALARIES:				\$56,040	\$56,040	\$112,080

(3% salary increase per year)

	Spring	Summer	Fall	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
Tuition						
TBD 1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TBD 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL TUITION:				\$0	\$0	\$0

(1% increase per year)

(1% increase per year)

Supplies and Services				YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
Research Supplies and Payments				\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000
				\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES:				\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000

Equipment				YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
Any equipment over \$5,000				\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EQUIPMENT:				\$0	\$0	\$0

Travel				YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
Domestic				\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Foreign				\$11,960	\$11,960	\$23,920
TOTAL TRAVEL:				\$13,960	\$13,960	\$27,920

Consultant Fees				YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
				\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL CONSULTANT FEES:				\$0	\$0	\$0

SubTotal				\$73,000	\$73,000	\$146,000
F&A Base				\$73,000	\$73,000	\$146,000
F&A Cost				\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL COST				\$73,000	\$73,000	\$146,000

Check:	Yearly Limit	\$0	\$0
	Current Subtotal (with overhead)	\$73,000	\$73,000
	Surplus/Deficit	(\$73,000)	(\$73,000)